1) Walking tour maps of the islands with vaporetto routes, 2) Travel options to/from cruise ships, the airport, and the mainland, 3) The challenge of traveling with large suitcases, and 4) Tips re selecting a hotel.

Venice Is Different From Other Travel Destinations:
Venice is a unique experience for the traveler. It's an island with one car-bus-train bridge to the mainland. Imagine a city where roads are replaced with canals and every intersection has a bridge across a canal. Venice islands have 150 canals and 409 bridges.

Everywhere you go involves walking over some bridges. Most bridges cross small canals, like walking up/down a flight of stairs in your house but the steps are short and wide making it less strenuous. Bridges over main canals are higher, similar to walking up/down three flights of stairs.

Traveling with large suitcases is a challenge. Unlike travel on land where cars, taxis, and buses drop you off in front of your hotel, the situation is much different in Venice. The Alilaguna boats will take you and your luggage to various docks on the islands. But it's rare to have someone at the dock to carry your luggage to your hotel. And if your hotel is far from the docks, you'll have to drag your luggage through narrow, crowded streets and up/down steps on many bridges – ugh! Private Water Taxis are an option for traveling with suitcases, but prices can be very high!

Choosing a Hotel: When selecting a hotel, investigate the cost, time, and physical effort to get to/from the airport, train station, or cruise ship with heavy luggage.

Getting To/From Cruise Ships: The Marittima cruise ship terminal is a secure area. The most direct route to a cruise ship from the airport/mainland is via taxicabs or a bus chartered by the Cruise Line. A taxi is about half the cost of the ship's chartered bus. Public buses do not stop at the ship terminal, they stop at Piazzale Roma about a mile away. The new People Mover connects the ship terminal to public buses and taxis from the mainland in Piazzale Roma. You can walk from Piazzale Roma to to the Grand Canal for boats and to the Venice train station.

How to get around Venice and the Islands: Vaporetti (plural - public water buses) are inexpensive and efficient. But which Vaporetto (singular) and route should you take to your destination?

CAVEAT
Information contained herein is believed to be accurate. PLEASE verify the information you use for your travel plans. Opinions expressed are my own. This port guide is protected by copyright law - see the last page of this guide for legal notices.

Tom Sheridan
I would like to thank George Selfridge Jr. and Michael Engelberg for their help on this port guide.
Cars, tour buses, local buses, taxicabs, trains, planes, and cruise ships are means to arrive in the Venice area.


- **Santa Lucia** is the train station on Venice. It is on the Grand Canal. The stop for Vaporetto (public water bus) in front of the train station is called Ferrovia.

- **Piazzale Roma** is the stop for buses and cabs from nearby towns and the airport. Passenger cars can also park here. Piazzale Roma is on the Grand Canal providing access to public water buses.

- The **Marittima cruise ship dock and passenger terminal** is shown.

- **Tronchetto** is the main parking island for bus tours (Trafalgar, Globus, etc.) and passenger cars. The **People Mover** connects Tronchetto with the Cruise Ship port and Piazzale Roma. It's a one Euro fare and a few minute ride from Tronchetto to the cruise ship or to Piazzale Roma.

- **Mestre** is a small town with 93 hotels and excellent transportation to Venice by train, bus, and cab.

- **Burano** is a picturesque fisherman's village with many restaurants and beautiful, handmade lace.

- **Murano** has glass factories and many shops selling artistic glass products and jewelry.
**#1 Santa Lucia Train Station** is on the other side of the Grand Canal. Trains arrive via a dedicated railway bridge. There are NO buses, cabs, or vehicles at the train station.

**#2 Piazzale Roma** is about a 1000 foot walk from the train station across a 250 foot long bridge which has many short steps. It could be troublesome with heavy luggage.

ALL public buses from the airport and most cabs from the mainland arrive at Piazzale Roma, about a mile from the cruise ship terminal.

Cruise ships often run free buses between Piazzale Roma and the ships. But cruise lines don't publicize this. Check with your cruise line re days and hours of operation! This is the best way to get to your ship. The buses park near the grove of trees South of the words “Piazzale Roma” in the aerial photo above.

There is a People Mover station in Piazzale Roma. It is fast and efficient to take the People Mover(PM) to the stop near the Cruise Ship Terminal, but it's about 1000 foot walk from that PM station to the entrance to the ship passenger terminal.

In October 2010, the People Mover was closed at 8 PM on a Tuesday for maintenance. Cruisers had to walk a mile across the highway bridge from Piazzale Roma to the ship while dragging heavy luggage. See white dots in the photo above. By starting on the right hand side of the bridge and later crossing the road to the left hand side, one can make the trip on safe sidewalks to avoid walking on the busy roadway.

The cabs in the Piazzale Roma refuse to take passengers to the Cruise Ship Terminal. Cab drivers wait in line a long time and want 40-100 Euro trips to the airport, not one-mile fares to the ships. If you paid enough money, the cab driver might take you to the cruise ship.

**#3 The Cruise Ship Passenger Terminal** has taxis outside. Whenever I am arriving/leaving a cruise ship with luggage, I hire a taxi between the mainland and the ship. And if I am traveling by train, I take a cab between the Mestre (mainland) station and the ship terminal. That way, I NEVER have to schlep my wife's heavy suitcase anywhere.

**Traveling with heavy suitcases can be a problem. Be sure to get details on your travel options BEFORE you arrive in Venice.**
Connection between cruise ships and the airport/mainland

- The easiest, most direct method to travel with heavy suitcases from the mainland such as the airport or the nearby town of Mestre is to hire a taxicab. In 2010, cabs from the airport or Mestre cost around 35 Euros and take 20 minutes. Check the price before you get into the cab. I've been fortunate to have honest cab drivers; some visitors complain of being gouged. There are websites to prearrange cab transit such as http://www.lowcostaxi.net/. This site shows 45 Euros for a taxi with up to 3 passengers & luggage from Marco Polo Airport to the ships. Cabs drop your luggage off near the passenger terminal and you walk a short distance to the check in for your cruise. You do not have to handle your luggage, it appears in your cabin usually within an hour or two.

- Cruise ships offer bus transfers to/from the airport. This is convenient, but it usually costs $ 68 (48 Euro) per person which is more than twice what you would pay to hire a cab for two people.

- Public buses are the cheapest way to travel between the mainland and a cruise ship. A bus ride from the airport to the cruise terminal costs less than 5 Euros per person. For two people, that saves 25-35 Euros vs. a taxicab. But the bus does not stop at the cruise ship terminal. Public buses stop at Piazzale Roma which is about a mile from the cruise terminal.

- In April 2011, the ATVO nonstop bus from the airport to the Piazzale Roma was 5 euros per person one way. The ATVO bus has lots of undercarriage space for luggage. By comparison, the ACTV city bus, which is cheaper, has only a 6-foot by 2-foot area on one side of the aisle for luggage that you have to load yourself. (That area is also the one reserved for people in wheelchairs, who get preference over luggage.) Also, the ACTV city bus route 15 that serves the airport starts beyond the airport, then stops at the airport on its way into Venice. So even though the ACTV city bus might be cheaper (and it's covered by the ACTV vaporetto and bus system tickets), it's worth the price to use the ATVO airport bus.

- When your bus arrives in Piazzale Roma, you have to unload your luggage. Look for a free bus or the People Mover. See page 3 of this guide for more information.

- Alilaguna Linea M boats travel between San Marco and a dock next cruise ships for 15 Euro/person.

Connection between cruise ships and trains

To/from Mestre Train Station, take a cab directly to the ship. It's about 35 Euros and is the same as taking a cab from the airport = a no hassle trip even with heavy luggage.

To/from Santa Lucia Train Station in Venice, walk about a thousand feet including a 250 foot-long bridge to Piazzale Roma. The red dots on the photo at left show the path from the train station to the buses and People Mover. See page 3 of this guide for details between Piazzale Roma and ships..
The main entrance to the Santa Lucia train station (below) has two short flights of stairs. The good news is that once you reach the top level of stairs at the train station, everything is flat. All trains are at the same level and all walkways between trains are at the same level.

I caution travelers that it may be a bit strenuous to drag heavy luggage across the 250 foot long Ponte della Costituzione (Constitution Bridge) between Piazzale Roma and the Santa Lucia train station. The bridge has many steps but they're relatively low height and wide.
People Mover between the cruise port and Piazzale Roma
Comments by George Selfridge (Oct 2010):

- The sidewalk near the Cruise Port People Mover Station was in poor condition necessitating walking in the street. The sidewalk is scheduled for resurfacing.
- It's important to check People Mover hours of operation posted on the wall where you enter the station. Hours are around 8 AM to 11 PM. The People Mover was closed at 8 PM one night for maintenance.

The photos below are from [http://europeforvisitors.com/venice/articles/venice-people-mover-photos.htm](http://europeforvisitors.com/venice/articles/venice-people-mover-photos.htm)

Elevated People Mover Station at Piazzale Roma
Enter station from the white building at right
Pointing to People Mover

Escalator to/from Upper Level at Piazzale Roma
Elevators are also available

Street Sign

Ticket Dispensers
Tickets cost one Euro. The touch screen has multiple languages. Buy a ticket, go to the entry checkpoint and hold the ticket under the scanner, barcode side up. When the barrier opens, enter the station.
When the train arrives, you will be able to enter through the sliding glass doors.

Inside the People Mover

<= Photo of People Mover station at Tronchetto Island

If you only have a short time in Venice on a cruise ship --
Change your plans and stay longer! You can't see Venice in the day and a half a cruise ship docks there. If you can't change your plans, and you have not visited Venice, spend your time wisely.
Typically, cruise lines allow you to board by early-afternoon and the ship departs Venice the next afternoon. Cruise lines offer a private shuttle boat service from the ship to San Marco. The service runs until ~ midnight. Be sure to check the schedule! Get your tickets for the ship's shuttle, and run, don't walk to get off the ship.
The private boat shuttle is the fastest, most direct, most scenic route through the canals to St. Marks. The private boats are clean, comfortable, never crowded, and usually have an upper deck to take unobstructed photos in late afternoon/early evening when the sky is is filled with rich color as a backdrop for your photos. The photo below shows the route of the boat shuttle to San Marco.

For more guides, see www.TomsPortGuides.com
Princess automatically bill your cabin $15/passenger for this shuttle service. Yeah, you can return unused tickets to the Purser for a credit. But do you really want to ride crowded public boats, spend more time getting to St. Mark's, and not have much opportunity for photos? You wouldn't really save any money. And if you came back late on a public boat, you would have to find a way from the Piazzale Roma to the ship wasting your precious time walking thru parking lots.

The advantage of arriving Venice in mid-afternoon is that the tour buses are gone. It's less crowded and the lines are shorter to get into San Marco Basilica which closes at 5 PM. Stores in Venice close around 7:30 PM and most are closed on Sundays. So you only have a few hours to visit the Basilica and the stores.

The photo below shows the usual cruise ship shuttle boat dock location.

This statue is the first site you'll see when the cruise ship's shuttle boat drops you off near San Marco (St. Marks). Walk left and cross 2 bridges to San Marco square.
San Marco is one of the most beautiful areas in Venice, an excellent area to explore.

**St. Mark's Basilica**

Be sure to visit the Basilica. Lines are long in the morning because tour bus groups have priority. But lines are much shorter in the afternoon and the tour bus groups are gone by 4 PM.

If you are using a cane or walker, you might avoid all lines by going to the North side entrance of the basilica. It's usually used as an exit, but the guard let us enter because my wife walks with a cane.

If you don't have time to visit the island of Murano, **there is a working glass factory only a few blocks from St. Mark's square**. It's used by tour buses with limited time in Venice. The factory is located North and East of St. Marks directly across the canal from the Sanzogno Gallery. The showroom has work signed by master craftsmen. *The Laguna glass factory is open to the public IF you want to see glass blowing. However, in almost every Sestiere (neighborhood) in Venice, there are multiple galleries that display works from the many factories on Murano. This is a quick way to see all the artists without spending a day on Murano. It is easy to get a 10% discount, but if you pay cash, it is possible to get 20%, especially if you are buying multiple pieces.*

This map shows the location of the glass factory next to the store for Sanzogno Gallery. As you can see, it's only a short walk from St. Mark's Basilica.

The sign above the door says Murano Glass Factory. In addition to table glassware, there's artwork signed by master craftsmen. It's beautiful, but very expensive.
Priorities - What to See & Do In Venice When You Don't Have Much Time

It a long list, so if your time is limited, plan ahead. Use the cruise ship private shuttle boat to San Marco because this is much faster than public water buses and you don't have time to waste. Your number 1 priority has to be to walk around St. Marks square. For a 360° Virtual Tour of San Marco square, see this link http://www.associazionepiazzasanmarco.it/360/HQ.php

If it's mid-afternoon and before 5 PM, go into St. Mark's Basilica. Organized tours always have priority to enter the church, but the lines tend to be shorter in mid-afternoon, before the church closes. And if you walk with a cane, ask the guard if he will allow you to enter the exit on the Northeast side of the church. There is no line there. When you get into the basilica, take particular note of the gorgeous inlaid marble floors.

The ship's excursions are the most efficient way to see a lot in a short time because the ship uses private tour boats which take a direct route to sites. When time is limited to half a day, it's not possible or practical to use self-guided tours on public transportation to see other islands, but the ship's excursions are time efficient!

You can do a gondola ride on your own; but many cruisers get together with friends to schedule a gondola or take the ship's excursion. You can do walking tours, shop, and find a great restaurant on your own.

The “Guide of Venice Project” was a consortium of tourist and commercial groups to prepare “official” maps and travel guides for Venice. I uploaded pdf files to my server which can be useful in planning your vacation.

The official tourist map includes 4-pages which can be printed and taped together to create a map around 2 feet by 2 feet with a lot of detail for Venice Island. The map shows specific locations for:

- VENICE RAILWAY STATION - S.LUCIA
- PLE ROMA
- JEWISH GHETTO OF VENICE
- MADONNA DELL'ORTO CHURCH
- SCUOLA S.G.EVANGELISTA
- RIALTO BRIDGE
- S.MARIA NOVA CHURCH
- SCUOLA DI SAN MARCO
- BASILICA S.GIOVANNI E PAOLO
- MURANO ISLAND
- SAINTS MARK'S BELL TOWER
- SAINTS MARK'S BASILICA
- PALAZZO DUCALE
- CORRER MUSEUM
- SAN GIORGIO ISLAND
- GIARDINI BIENNALE
- SCUOLA DI S.ROCCO
- BASILICA DEI FRARI
- CA'REZZONICO
- ACCADEMIA GALLERY
- PEGGY GUGGENHEIM COLLECTION


The official tourist guide for Venice and the islands

WOW! This is a 58 page beautifully illustrated guide. It is packed with information and travel advice re how to get there, open hours, and entrance fees. It's an exhaustive review of history, the scuola, sestieres, travel itineraries, cuisine, glassware, gondolas, events, and the islands of Murano, Burano, Torcello, etc. It's much better than any travel book you could buy and it's FREE! It's a MUST READ.

The published guide was a huge file due to high resolution photos making it difficult to download from the internet and impossible to attach to emails. To correct these problems, I reduced photo resolution from “high” to “minimal”. Even with these changes, it's a big file to download.

Shopping in Venice:
You can start your shopping tour from San Marco. Just follow the crowds. Here is an amateur video showing some of the stores [http://www.travelguide.tv/venice/shopping.html](http://www.travelguide.tv/venice/shopping.html)

Whenever we are in Venice, we visit St. Mark's and the Rialto Bridge. Walk the winding streets following the signs “Per Rialto” or “Per San Marco”. This map shows the general relationship of these locations.

It's about 2000 feet thru winding streets from St. Mark's to Rialto Bridge and another 4000 feet to the train station or bus stop. Think of it as the largest shopping mall in the world. Follow the crowd and watch for the occasional sign on the buildings pointing the direction to “Per Rialto” or “Per San Marco”. It's hard to get lost, but fun if you do!

The Rialto bridge is quite distinctive. It's a “must see” site in Venice.

The stores around St. Marks are the higher end, higher quality, more expensive merchandise. By comparison, there are many stores selling less expensive merchandise and souvenirs around the Rialto bridge. You can get bargain prices on things like “glass candy” that looks like cellophane wrapped real candy. Our grand-kids can't figure out how to unwrap it.
Hotel Choices – On the Mainland or Venice Island?

Some believe they must stay in Venice to experience the ambiance and romance. I believe hassle free travel with luggage is important. We travel with two 50-lb, 29” suitcases and two carry-on suitcases. I've never seen porters in Venice or Mestre to meet me at the bus or water taxi stop to take my luggage to the hotel.

For travel convenience with luggage and easy access to Venice, we stay in Mestre near the train station.

![Map of Mestre, Italy](image)

We like the Tritone Hotel. It's 4-star rated, comfortable, quiet, and attractively priced with an excellent American-style breakfast. The Mestre train station is in a clean, safe area. We travel by train from Mestre to Santa Lucia station on the Grand Canal in Venice. Trains run every fifteen minutes and cost one Euro each way. Trains run pretty much all day allowing us to have a late dinner in Venice. We also have the option to take a bus from the Mestre train station to Piazzale Roma in Venice.

Travel is convenient between our hotel in Mestre to/from the airport or cruise ship:

- To/From the airport, we take a bus for 5 Euros/person or taxi for 35 Euros/couple to Mestre (2010 prices). Check the fare before you get into the cab. Cabs and buses stop at the train station across the street from the hotel. There are no stairs to climb and it's only a hundred feet to the hotel entrance.
- On the day we will board a ship in Venice, we check out early in the morning and store our luggage in a secure room at the hotel. We take the train to Venice and return to Mestre by train in the afternoon to pick up luggage and take a taxi for 35 Euros/couple (2010 prices) to the cruise ship terminal. The taxi drops our luggage at the terminal for transport to our room = effortless, no hassle way to get to the ship.

Checklist for hotels on the mainland:

Here are some questions to consider to find the “perfect” hotel on the mainland. Where exactly is the hotel? How far is it (in meters) from the nearest bus stop to/from the airport and Piazzale Roma in Venice? What is the condition of the sidewalk between the bus stop and the hotel? Are their any stairs you have to climb with luggage? How far is it (in meters) to walk to the train station to get a train into Venice Santa Lucia station?

Sources of information – hotels on the mainland:

Ask these questions of the hotel and check hotel reviews on websites. Here’s a website with reviews on 93 hotels in Mestre, Italy: [http://www.venere.com/italy/mestre/#p](http://www.venere.com/italy/mestre/#p) It has seven pages of information!

Ask the hotel for the nearest cross street if you can't find the hotel on maps. Also ask for the street and cross street location of the nearest bus stop. Use Google maps, aerial photos, or [www.bing.com](http://www.bing.com) “bird's eye” and street view maps of the hotel area. Review photo maps at different magnifications and you'll learn a lot about the terrain, whether there are stairs to climb, etc. You can also position an icon of a man on the street and rotate it around for a “virtual” walk down the sidewalk to preview what it is like to walk to your hotel.
Be skeptical of any hotel that claims their employees will walk down the street to meet you at a bus stop and carry your luggage to the hotel. That's very rare in Italy.

**Checklist for hotels on the island of Venice:**

There are 446 hotels in Venice = lots of choices/locations. Where exactly is the hotel? Which water transports (name of the lines and water bus numbers) can I use to get to the hotel with heavy luggage from the Marco Polo Airport? How long does it take for that water bus? And what does it cost? Can I schedule that water bus via internet and prepay? What is it like walking to the hotel i. e., distance in meters, condition of sidewalk, crowds, and number of bridges I have to cross?

**How far it is (in meters) from the hotel to the nearest Vaporetto dock for travel to sites in Venice?** See pages 28-30 of this guide re how to locate Vaporetto docks near your hotel, determine the name of the docks, which Vaporetto lines stop there and the routes and timing to Venice area locations.

You need the exact name of the hotel, closest Vaporetto stop, and the closest Alilaguna Line stop from the airport. The Vaporetto (public water bus) stop at many locations, but Alilaguna boats from the airport only stop at a limited number of docks. I caution you that the Alilaguna and Vaporetto boats sometimes use different names for the same docks! The S. Marco Vallaresso dock is the same location as San Marco (Giard.). Also, Alilaguna schedules refer to “Hilton” on the blue line and “Mol. Stucky” on the Rossa line. I think they are referring to the same 5-star Hilton Molino Stucky hotel in Venice. If you're staying there, clarify this point!

**Sources of information:**

The Alilaguna website [http://www.alilaguna.it/en](http://www.alilaguna.it/en) lists prices, time schedules, and docks where the boats stop. You can save money by pre-ordering your boat ticket on line. The cost to any regular stop is ~ 15 Euros per person on the website. Private water taxis to any hotel in Venice are 85 Euros per person on the website. Travel time between the airport and the boat stop for your hotel is about an hour. On Italian websites, click on “En” or a British flag symbol to display in English.

Here are the docks where the Alilaguna boats stop in Venice from the Marco Polo airport.

**Linea Blu**

**Linea Rossa**

**Linea Arancio**
This map shows ALL of the boat stops for the three Alilaguna lines (Blu, Rossa, and Arancio). Alilaguna is the major, reasonably priced, boat transport from the airport to hotels in the Venice area. Note the boats only make 13 stops on 4 different islands!! If your hotel is close to one of these stops, you're lucky. But considering the fact that there are 446 hotels in Venice and this is a huge area, there are probably many hotels that are not near these boat stops. To help you gauge distance, I have repeated the scale of the map in several locations showing 2000 feet which is about 4/10ths of a mile.

What Are Your Options to Get to Your Island Hotel Easily?

The website (above) has some useful info, you might also consider:
1. Minimize your luggage to a small, backpack (a la Rick Steves) so luggage does not restrict your selection of boats nor your ability to walk a long distance to a hotel over multiple bridges.
2. Book a hotel a comfortable walking distance (with luggage) from one of the Alilaguna boat stops.
3. Get a group of people together to help defray/share the cost of a private water taxi.
4. Bite the bullet and pay up to 100 Euros ~ $140/person for a private water taxi directly to your hotel. Be sure to clarify the exact total fare and negotiate a price before using any private water taxi!

Private water taxi websites post this notice: Several hotels in Venice do not have a door over a canal accessible to water taxi, and many hotels are not located by a canal. The boat driver will drop you off at the closest possible dock and unload your luggage. But the boat driver will not help you with luggage to the hotel, as they are not allowed to leave their boat unguarded. The driver's assistant will walk you to the hotel but will not take your luggage. Porter service is available in some parts of Venice but it's expensive. If your need a porter inquire about this service.

Another option is to book a hotel on Lido Island – I've never stayed there, but I've visited Lido.
You should be able to get a cab from the boat dock to your hotel on Lido.

Venice Lido (Lido di Venezia) is an island. It is the narrow strip of land which separates the central part of the Venetian lagoon from the Adriatic Sea. It's the origin of the word 'lido' as used in the English-speaking world to describe bathing establishments. Developed as a seaside resort at the beginning of the twentieth century, it has been popular for beach holidays ever since. It's a compromise between the practical mainland and the historic city. The atmosphere on the Lido is very different from Venice: there are leafy residential avenues, roads, cars, cyclists and pavements.
Getting Around Venice via Public Water Buses

You can walk around Venice; you don't have to take public transportation. I recommend walking from the train station (to the right in this photo) toward the wine shop and the Rialto Bridge. Follow the signs “Per Rialto”. It's a treasure trove of shops carrying a wide range of high quality products such as jewelry, clothing, artwork, hand made paper, etc. - a shopper's paradise! And there any many fine restaurants all along the canal. You can continue to walk from the Rialto Bridge to San Marco.

Why use public water buses?
There are gondolas for short, slow, romantic rides for a short distance at a high price. Private water taxis will take you anywhere but they're prohibitively expensive. Some hotels have their own boats which are restricted to guests and usually used to connect the hotel to the public water bus system. Public water buses are economical and efficient to crisscross Venice and the only practical way to get to Murano and Burano.

Vaporetti, the public water buses, are run by a company called Actv
Public water buses called Vaporetto (singular) or Vaporetti (plural).
A few key issues to consider:

• Crowds – vaporetto are usually crowded. Mike Engelberg reported:
  A ten-fold increase in the number of visitors in town before Easter than encountered 12 days earlier in 2011. The vaporetto system was straining to accommodate everyone on the more popular routes through the Grand Canal and to Murano and Burano.
  Because of the crowd, the lines at the ACTV ticket windows at Piazzale Roma were quite long. Cruisers would be well advised to use the Venice Connected site to buy tickets in advance so they don't have to queue in long lines. (But they will have to use the ACTV ticket-dispensing machines to punch in their purchase code to get their tickets.)
  Key learning = be prepared for the possibility of very crowded water buses.

• Luggage – vaporetto are not intended for passengers carrying heavy luggage. When the boats are crowded, there really isn't room for luggage and you'll find that you have walk down narrow steps, sometimes past other passengers in the aisles. Mike noted
  In theory, vaporetto customers are supposed to be allowed only one piece of luggage. In practice, we and other passengers brought more than that on board. But that was on 10 April, 2011 when the crowds were minimal and there were no ACTV employees at the vaporetto gates. Those employees might prevent customers from bringing multiple pieces of luggage on board.
  During our 22 - 24 April, 2011 visit, when crowds were humongous and there were ACTV agents at the vaporetto docks, we probably would not have been allowed to bring on board both 25” and 20” bags for each of us. This is all the more reason to stay, as you suggest, at a hotel to which you can easily carry your bags. That could either be in the vicinity of the bus and train stations (which Rick Steves does not recommend) or over in Mestre.
  Key learning = don't carry multiple pieces of luggage on vaporetto at anytime. If you carry one piece of luggage, you may have problems when boat are crowded.
• **Location of boat docks** - There are several docks for different lines of the Vaporetto in an area. As you approach the floating docks, you will see a list of the lines departing from that location. You will often find you arrive at a dock and have to walk a hundred yards or across a bridge to a nearby dock to get the water bus to return to your original location. With a bit of searching, it's easy to figure out where to stand for the water bus you want.

Travel is simpler if you know the “official name” of your destination. For example, Murano has several water bus stops. To minimize walking, it's best to decide where you want to disembark on Murano such as the stop at Faro near the lighthouse. An important stop in Venice is Fondamente Nove because it is the closest/fastest route to Murano and Burano islands. It is known as “F. Te Nove” or “F. Nove” because the word “fondamente” is too long to put on a dock, a schedule, etc.

*In April 2011, Routes 41/42 and 51/52 that run clockwise around the island use a temporary, isolated dock at Piazzale Roma. It is not near the docks for all the other lines, including 41/42 and 51/52 that run counter-clockwise. Instead, the clockwise dock is southwest of Piazzale Roma, a good hike from all the other docks. In fact, it is quite near the People Mover track. Most people who disembarked from our vaporetto turned right to go to the People Mover, then turned left and walked under the People Mover track to get to Piazzale Roma. It is faster going that way than to walk in the direction of the other vaporetto docks.*

• **Boat identification** – You would think that all boats would have a sign clearly indicating the name of the line such as 41, 52, LN, etc. But that is not necessarily true. Some boats have a plastic sign which is supposed to be visible on the bow as the boat approaches a dock, but sometimes those signs are missing. When I cannot see clear identification on the boat, I always say the name of my destination and the deck hand always says yes or no, so I don't get on the wrong boat.

**Vaporetto Routes and Timetables**

Be prepared for changes and surprises. Relax and go with the flow. This is the Italian public transit system, it ain't Switzerland!

ACTV has an unusual way of changing information available on websites. It's always a surprise when I visit the websites. When I drafted this guide, there was an outstanding user friendly listing of maps, timetables, etc. I incorporated multiple screen shots and information from [www.ACTV.IT/en](http://www.ACTV.IT/en) throughout this guide. But that website is either temporarily down for repair or it has been changed. I left that information in this guide because some day that website might work the way it did last year.

I found a new website with 2011 routes and timetables. It's not user friendly, so I've incorporated some screen shots on how to get info on routes and timetables.
First go to [http://www.hellovenezia.com/](http://www.hellovenezia.com/) Click on **TRANSPORT Fares & Timetables** From the scroll down menu, click on **TIMETABLES Boat Lines** SCROLL DOWN the screen and you will see this information (below on the next page) **Vaporetto Lines and Stops** April 1 – November 1, 2011; **NOTE** – this is subject to change

I clicked on on the clock icon on the right hand side of line 1 for the timetable (below)

| **LINEA 1** P.ROMA - FERROVIA - RIALTO - S.TOMA' - S.MARCO - LIDO |  |
| P.ROMA (Finale) | 5.01 | 5.21 | 5.41 | 6.01 | 6.21 | 1 | 11 | 21 | 31 | 41 | 51 | 20.21 | 20.31 | 20.41 | 20.51 | 21.01 | 21.11 | 21.21 | 21.31 | 21.41 | 21.51 | 22.01 | 1 | 21 | 41 | 23.41 |
| S.MARCO/OLA | 5.10 | 5.30 | 5.50 | 6.10 | 6.30 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 20.30 | 20.40 | 20.50 | 21.00 | 21.10 | 21.20 | 21.30 | 21.40 | 21.50 | 22.10 | 10 | 30 | 50 | 23.50 |
| RIALTO (Line 1) | 5.20 | 5.40 | 6.00 | 6.20 | 6.40 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 0 | 20.40 | 20.50 | 21.00 | 21.10 | 21.20 | 21.30 | 21.40 | 21.50 | 22.00 | 22.20 | 20 | 40 | 0 | 0.00 |
| S.SILVESTRO | 5.23 | 5.43 | 6.03 | 6.23 | 6.43 | 23 | 33 | 43 | 53 | 63 | 3 | 20.43 | 20.53 | 21.03 | 21.13 | 21.23 | 21.33 | 21.43 | 21.53 | 22.03 | 22.23 | 23 | 43 | 0 | 0.00 |


You may want to print out these tables and bring them with you to Venice.

There is a large map showing vaporetto stops at various locations but you cannot get a copy of this map for free. You can save it to your computer by going to [http://www.tomsportguides.com/uploads/5/8/5/4/58547429/vaporettoroutes.pdf](http://www.tomsportguides.com/uploads/5/8/5/4/58547429/vaporettoroutes.pdf)

I highly recommend you download this map to your computer and print it out for you vacation.

**Tips on printing the VaporettoRoutes.pdf file**

Open the file in Acrobat Reader as shown above. Change the magnification to 50% to see the size of the display. Set it to the magnification you would like on your map which may be less than 50%. Now turn on your printer and click File Print in the top left menu list from the view on your screen. If your printer supports Page Scaling set it to “Tile all pages” and Tile Scale at 50% or whatever magnification you like. Click the box for Cut Marks and set the overlap to .005 inch. Now click on Print and you'll get 4-pages which you cut and paste for a 22”x17” map. You will be the envy of all your friends in Venice because you'll be the only one with a highly legible Vaporetto Route map. I have duplicate the map on the next page, but it's too small for me.
Line #1 travels the Grand Canal. The Piazzale Roma bus stop is P. Roma. The train station is Ferrovia. The Rialto Bridge is Rialto. St. Mark's square is S. Marco.

The quick route departure point for the islands of Murano and Burano is F. Te Nove (also known as F Nove). Line #1 does not stop at F. Te Nove.

Line #2 is similar to Line #1 and it stops at Tronchetto where the bus tours of Italy stop for Venice. Also, Line #2 travels south of Venice. This could be a good line to use if you want to photograph the Grand Canal and the south area of Venice. There are many, many beautiful buildings along this route. If you're an avid photographer, remember the Vaporetto can be quite crowded depending on the time of day. Try to be at the front of the boarding line to get a seat on the outside, stern section of the boat. Change seats to a better location when passengers leave.

Lines # 41 and #42 travel in different directions – clockwise & counterclockwise. They do not stop at San Marco. Walk from S. Marco to S. Zaccaria to get this water bus.

To get to Murano from the bus stop (P. Roma) or the train station (Ferrovia), take line 42 which stops at F. Nove and continues on to Murano.

Lines # 51 and #52 do not stop at San Marco. Walk from S Marco to S. Zaccaria to get this water bus.

From the bus stop (P. Roma) or the train station (Ferrovia), I would take line 52 to F. Te Nove and then change to another Vaporetto for Murano or Burano.
There are several Vaporetto lines serving the Venice area. They travel different routes and make different stops. Travel time can be significantly different depending on the route they take and the number of stops. We made the mistake once of taking a Vaporetto to Burano using the outside sea route, instead of the much faster direct route from F. Te Nove. The trip was so long, we almost missed our ship leaving Venice for Florida!

**Vaporetto are wheelchair accessible. See this site for more info:**
http://europeforvisitors.com/venice/articles/vaporetto_routes.htm

Here are some additional updates by Michael Engelberg:

*I’ll bet the majority of visitors to Venice know only about the vaporetti that travel the Grand Canal. You would do your readers a favor by pointing out there are vaporetto lines that go around the island. Those lines (the 41/42 and 51/52 and perhaps others) make it easier and faster to get from St. Mark’s Square to the Piazzale Roma bus station and the Santa Lucia train station, and vice versa. Also, to get to Burano, rather than taking route DM (Diretto Murano) from Piazzale Roma to Murano Faro, then transferring to route LN to Burano, we instead took route 51 clockwise from Piazzale Roma to Fondamente Nuove (which is on the north shore of the island of Venice), then transferred to route LN (which originates at Fondamente Nuove) to Burano. This itinerary was much less crowded than DM-->LN in the direction toward Burano. Unfortunately, there is no way to avoid the crowds returning from Burano, but it is still more advisable to use route LN all the way to Fondamente Nuove and transfer to routes 41/42 and 51/52 than it is to go to Murano Faro and transfer to route DM. There were a ton of people waiting at Murano Faro for route DM back to Venice. Why get in lines twice?*

A single trip Vaporetto ticket is € 6.50 and is good for 75 minutes in a single direction. 2011 prices:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours (H)</th>
<th>12H</th>
<th>24H</th>
<th>36H</th>
<th>48H</th>
<th>72H</th>
<th>7-Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Euros</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These tickets allow use of public transport, by sea or by road in Venice, Mestre, and the islands including the ACTV bus from the airport to Piazzale Roma. You can purchase Vaporetto tickets at train stations, the airport, at ticket sales offices next to the canals, or on the internet. Seasoned travelers spending several days in Venice find it convenient and save money by purchasing a *Venice Connected Card*. This card allows you to combine services for Vaporetto, land buses, admission to museums, connection to WiFi internet, and even public toilets.

**You can purchase Venice Connected Cards in Italy, but many travelers prefer to purchase them online at www.VeniceConnected.com.** Click on “Buy Now” on the screen, adjust the arrows on the calendar to the month and click on the first day you wish to use use the card e. g., May 18th. The top menu shows “Transport”, “Car Parking”, “Culture”, “Services”, and “Leisure”. Click on these menu items, select the services you wish, and “add to basket”. To remove an item from the Summary, click the red x. When done, click checkout.

Pay with your credit card and a Voucher will be sent to the e-mail address you provided on the Form. You pick up your cards in the Venice area such as at the Marco Polo airport. There’s a desk at Exit 2 outside Baggage Claim where you can redeem your Card. And you can use your new card for the ACTV bus from the airport to to Piazzale Roma in Venice !!!

The ACTV vaporetto and city bus system made a major change on 1 April, 2011. Now, a connected card ticket holder must validate his/her ticket every time he/she boards a vehicle. It's important, but not difficult to do - validate tickets by waving it in front of the card reader before boarding vaporetto.
In 2010, there WAS An Incredibly Useful resource at www.Actv.IT/en. It had an interactive map showing ALL Vaporetto stops in the Venice area. If you know the name of the dock, select it from a drop down menu. If you don't know the name, click on a dock near your location on the map. The name of that dock will appear and you can select it as your starting or ending point. Then select another dock as your travel ending point. Enter the time you wish to arrive and the screen displays your choice of public boats that arrive at that dock, nearest that time. You can also click on a route icon to see all the stops for that Vaporetto. And you can enlarge the map to show more detail. This is really slick!!!

BUT this website is NOT working in May 2011. I have left references to it in this guide in hopes that the Italians will reactivate this user-friendly website.

Example of how to use the www.Actv.IT/en website. Here's the initial screen.

I used the drop down menu to select Ferrovia (at the train station) as my starting point and Murano Faro as my destination with a goal of arriving around 10:15 AM. When I clicked on “search” the screen displayed line #41 and line DM as my choices. Note that the selected line displays the route. I colored in the route on line DM using yellow dots. For the same price, it takes three and a half times longer on Line #41 compared with Line DM for this trip due to different routes and number of stops!!!
Here's how to find the names of docks using the map feature on the www.Actv.IT/en website.

To find the name of the boat dock closest to San Marco, move the map around and use the + sign in the upper left corner to enlarge near San Marco. You'll see icons for two Vaporetto stops.

Click on one of the boat stops e.g., the one on the right. A text message shows it's S. Zaccaria

Switch from “Mappa” to “Ibrida/hybrid” view and enlarge it to see a detailed photo.

See pages 28-30 of this guide for more detail on how to locate boat docks near your hotel.

Getting to Murano from Venice by Actv Public Water Buses

From S. Zaccaria (just up the waterfront promenade from the Piazza San Marco and the Doge's Palace):

Take the #42 waterbus, which will take you to Murano by way of the F. Te Nove and the cemetery island of San Michele in just over 40 minutes. (Or you can ride the #41 down the Grand Canal and on to Murano, but the voyage will take nearly an hour.) When you reach Murano, get off at any stop. (Colonna is handy for glass blowing demonstrations; Museo is close to the Glass Museum and the Basilica of Santi Maria e Donato.)

From the Fondamente Nove (on the north side of the historic center, facing the Lagoon):

Catch the #41 or #42 waterbus. The #41 will get you to the Murano Colonna stop in only 10 minutes; the Faro, Navagero, and Museo stops take longer. Alternatively, you could catch an LN (Laguna Nord) boat, a widebody vaporetto that takes only 9 minutes to reach the Murano Faro stop on its way to the more distant islands of Burano and Torcello. NOTE LN may show the number 12 instead of LN. If in doubt, ask the deckhand.

From the Piazzale Roma or Ferrovia (the bus and railroad stations): Ride the DM (Diretto Murano) boat, which takes 17 minutes to reach Murano Colonna from the railroad station. Stay on the boat if you'd rather get off at Faro, Navagero, Museo, or Venier. Note: This route is sometimes seasonal, so if it isn't running, take the #41 water bus, which is slower than DM with local stops along the way.
This aerial photo shows all of the Vaporetto stops on Murano Island.

Faro (near the lighthouse) is the major boat stop. Colonna is convenient because it is at the south end of the canal.

But all of the water bus stops on Murano are convenient for sightseeing. The island is not that large. Murano is the “glass island”. Walk along the canal which divides the island to visit the shops selling glass, artwork, jewelry, etc. The artistic glass work, signed by master tradesmen, is gorgeous. But it's very expensive.

You'll find several factories demonstrating glass blowing.

There are restaurants along the canal. Be sure to walk the full length of the canal to see the sights and to cross the bridges. There is a very attractive pedestrian bridge at the north end of the canal where it meets the east-west canal.
Photos of Murano

Lighthouse near Faro Dock

Canal through center of Murano

There is usually a glasswork display along the streets in Murano:

Venice-05-06-2011.pdf  Page 25 of 34  For more guides, see www.TomsPortGuides.com
How to reach Burano:
Board the LN (Lagoon North) boat at F. Te Nove in Venice or the Faro stop (near the lighthouse) on Murano. From Faro, it's a 33-minute trip to Burano.

Burano
The island of Burano lies in the northern part of the Venetian Lagoon, about 40 minutes from Venice by motorboat. It has a much different atmosphere from Murano or Venice's historic center, thanks to the Buranese custom of painting houses in bright colors—a tradition that may have had its origins in the color schemes of local fishing boats. Everywhere you look, you'll see houses clad in blue, green, pink, rose, lavender, purple, yellow, and other colors. And because Burano's houses tend to be small, the island has a cheerful coziness.

Fishing is one traditional occupation of the Buranelli; the other is lace-making. If you haven't spent your souvenir budget in the glass shops of Murano, you may find it hard to leave Burano without a supply of doilies and table linens or a wedding dress. (One word of caution: True Venetian Point lace is in limited supply, and many items in the shops are imported or machine-made.)

A "must see" attraction on Burano is the Museo del Merletto, or Lace Museum in the old Scuola di Merletti or lace-making school. (Closed Tuesdays.)

Roman Catholics and lovers of solitude may enjoy a side trip to the monastery island of San Francescino del Deserto, where the nine Franciscan monks welcome visitors from 9-10 a.m. and 3-5 p.m. daily. The island is 20 minutes by rowboat from the Burano waterfront. (A gondolier does the rowing.) For more information, or to book an overnight stay, call the monks at 041 528 6863 when you're in Venice.
Photos of Burano

The last travel tip:

Always have your camera ready! Here's a ship I spotted near San Marco.

The next few pages show how to make custom maps, general information for cruisers, and background on port guides.

I wish you a fantastic vacation in Venice!

Tom Sheridan
How To Make Custom Maps and Travel Documents for Your Vacation

You need screen capture software to make custom maps. I like MWSnap 3.0.0.74. It's a small, yet powerful Windows program for snapping (capturing) images from selected parts of your computer monitor screen and saving them as jpg files. It's FREE to download and use.

Download it from [http://download.cnet.com/MWSnap/3000-2072_4-10524228.html](http://download.cnet.com/MWSnap/3000-2072_4-10524228.html)

How to create a map showing the Vaporetto stop closest to your hotel:

I used the box titled “Other Hotel Options in Venice” to restrict my search to 3 Star hotels and randomly selected the fifth hotel listed = Hotel American-Dinesen. This displayed the information below.

Click on “view map” and resize the display to the left half of your computer monitor screen. Start another copy of Internet Explorer, log onto [www.Actv.IT/en](http://www.Actv.IT/en), resize the display to the right half of your computer monitor screen. Move and adjust the maps so the landmark “Collezione Peggy Guggenheim” is show in each map.

Click on the icon for the Vaporetto stop in the right screen closest to the hotel. It's Accademia as shown below.


Use MWSnap software to save the map from the Expedia website as a jpg file. Use your photo editing software to position the Accademia boat dock, scale the map, and add text showing the walk from the hotel to the dock.

How to make a map showing public water bus travel from your hotel to Murano Island:
Start MWSnap software on your computer. Then log onto www.Actv.IT/en
Using the “search timetable box”, enter
- Departure at the boat dock closest to your hotel “Accademia”.
- Your destination such as Murano Colonna,
- Your desired arrival time such as 9:30 AM and
- Click on “search”.

The Actv website displays the route to your destination. It involves two different boats:
- 8:23 AM board Line #1 at Accademia arriving Ferrovia by the train station at 8:51 AM
- 8:54 AM board Line DM at Ferrovia Bar Roma arriving Murano Colonna at 9:11 AM.

Adjust the magnification of the map using the +/- at the top left corner and position it as you wish. Then save the portion of the screen you want to keep as a jpg file using MWSnap as shown on the next page.

Map of water bus travel from your hotel to Murano Colonna arriving around 9:30 AM.
This custom map was created with MWSnap and photo editing software for the Al Vagon Restaurant.

### Search results

From ACCADEMIA to MURANO COLONNA  
Arrival time: 9:30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Departure stop</th>
<th>Departure time</th>
<th>Arrival stop</th>
<th>Arrival time</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Validity</th>
<th>Timetable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 ACCADEMIA SX</td>
<td>08:23</td>
<td></td>
<td>FERROVIA S. LUCIA DX</td>
<td>08:51</td>
<td>00:28</td>
<td>LMMGVY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DM FERROVIA BAR ROMA</td>
<td>08:54</td>
<td></td>
<td>MURANO COLONNA ARRIVI</td>
<td>08:11</td>
<td>00:17</td>
<td>LMMGVY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Hotel Al Vagon

231 reviews - more info

Cannaregio, 5619  
30121 Venice, Italy  
041 526 5556

hotelalvagon.com

**Al Vagon Restaurant**

Directions Search nearby 
Sava to... more

1000 foot from Rialto Bridge

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For more guides, see [www.TomsPortGuides.com](http://www.TomsPortGuides.com)
Common Questions RE Cruising

- Exchanging Money
- Using Credit Cards in Europe
- How Many Cruise Ships Are In Port?
- Using the Internet on the Ship

Exchanging Money
Currency exchange is complicated due to hidden fees of organizations who exchange money. There's the “official exchange rate” which changes every day, the money handlers “exchange rate”, cost of the transaction, additional fees, and different exchange rates to “buy” vs. “sell” a currency.

Cruise ships and independent money changers in airports are poor places to exchange money. The best place is an international bank ATM, but your US financial institution may add “additional” fees to the transaction.

If we fly to Europe, we use the ATM machine of a major bank in the airport. If we are arriving in Europe on a ship from USA, we go to the ATM at the first port where we can get Euros. Note – Gibraltar uses their own “Pounds”, not Euros. Make sure you are getting Euros.

Bank of America and Wachovia charge 3% over the official exchange rate plus a $2 to $5 fee per ATM transaction. Talk to your bank to find which European banks accept their ATM cards and do Google searches on ATM cards in Europe to find sites such as this link below:

We only use Euro cash for cabs, coffee, and small item purchases. Also, you always need several Euro coins in your pocket for public toilets. Our largest purchase with Euro cash is for personal tour guides.

A few people like travelers checks. Since my biggest purchase with Euros is private guides and I don't know any guides who accept travelers checks, I don't use them.

Typically, ATM machines limit the withdrawal to 250 Euros. My wife and I can collectively withdraw 500 Euros ($700) a day because our ATM cards have different numbers for the same account. We use Bank of America debit cards at ATM’s. Search the web and talk to your financial institutions to determine the best cards for you to carry in Europe.

Using Credit Cards in Europe
Chose a credit card that gives you the most favorable rate. We use Capital One credit cards for all purchases in Europe to get the “official exchange rate” with no fees.

BEFORE you travel, contact all of your financial institutions and tell them when you will be traveling, the countries you are visiting, and which credit card account numbers you will be carrying with you. Otherwise, the bank may shut down your credit card because they suspect fraudulent use. If that happens, your card will not work until you talk to the US bank.

Ask your credit card company if they offer any special assistance to travelers. American Express has a good support program for their customers in Europe. They will help you in many ways. Some credit card companies will give you a cash advance in Europe even if you do not have identification because your passport has been stolen. They require you to go to a European bank and talk to you by phone to verify your identity. One of the credit card companies gave me a “secret password” for my use in Europe so they could “identify” me from any phone I used to call the bank.

I usually sign up for fraud and identity insurance with my credit card company just before leaving for Europe and pay $8/month. When I return to the US, I cancel the insurance.

Make a list of the credit card account numbers you are carrying on vacation with all the details on the card and contact information. I keep this list and a photocopy of my passport in my shaving kit and on my computer which I can access worldwide via www.carbonite.com.

How Many Cruise Ships Are In Port?
When a port is crowded, you can encounter problems with travel due to congestion causing delays on trains and on the highways. And you may have a long wait for a cab. Another issue is that the cruise ship may dock at a less convenient location in the port or even divert to a different port in another city. It happens!

To determine ships in port, go to www.cruisett.com

This site lists all ports and the schedule of all cruise ships in port by date. Click on the third menu item “Ports”. In this example below, I show information for the port of Civitavecchia for Rome.
Scroll down to “Italy”. This shows all the cruise ports in Italy.

**Italy**


Click on Civitavecchia (Rome) and on May 2011. The screen below appears. Note that on the 13th of May, 2011 there are six cruise ships in port. The Port Load is 14,733 passengers on those six cruise ships. Imagine almost 15 thousand people trying to get to Rome at the same time!!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Port Load Ships in port</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01-May-11 8205</td>
<td>Costa Concordia, Eurodam, Wind Surf, MSC Lirica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02-May-11 6975</td>
<td>Liberty Of The Seas, Costa Mediterranea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03-May-11 2224</td>
<td>Norwegian Jade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04-May-11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05-May-11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-May-11</td>
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<tr>
<td>07-May-11</td>
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<td>08-May-11</td>
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<td>09-May-11</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-May-11</td>
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<td>11-May-11</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-May-11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-May-11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In May, 2010 our Princess ship announced the number of passengers disembarking cruise ships was so high that the wait for a taxi to Rome would be 4 to 5 hours!!! If your cruise ends in Civitavecchia, PRE-PLAN how you are getting from the ship to Rome. I’d use the ship’s transfer service for reliable travel to Rome.

**Using the Internet on the Ship**

If your primary use of the ship’s internet is for email and if you're traveling with a laptop computer, there is a simple way to minimize internet connection time and to have excellent email performance.

I spend 95% of my time reading and writing email and only a small fraction of time sending/receiving email. **Most people on cruise ships read and write their email while actively connected to the internet.** They spend a lot of money on internet minutes and complain about the high cost and slow, email internet connection.

Here's a solution to this problem. Download the FREE Windows Live software to your laptop BEFORE you go on a cruise. Use this web link

http://explore.live.com/windows-live-mail?os=other

**Windows Live Mail** is one of a half-dozen programs in Windows Live Essentials. I also like the FREE **Windows Live Photo Gallery** for editing photos.

WindowsLive Mail can help you organize your life all in one place on your PC. Add and see multiple email accounts in email programs like Outlook, Mail, Hotmail, Gmail, and Yahoo! Even see your email, calendars, and contacts when you don't have an Internet connection. The software is lighting fast and user friendly.

Install it and click on “Add E-mail Account” to recognize your multiple email accounts by entering the email addresses and passwords you use for those addresses. Then click the “Sync” button in the main menu. The software connects to your email accounts, downloads a copy of all your email onto you laptop and then uploads/sends any new emails you've written from your laptop. It does NOT delete the original email at the server where your email resides. Make sure it disconnects from the server and the ship's internet service when it's done.

**TIP:** Install the software on your laptop and synchronize it with your email accounts BEFORE you go on a cruise. One passenger installed the software on the ship and tried to synchronize with three weeks of unread/junk emails on his server. His laptop ran a long time to synchronize hundreds and hundreds of unread emails and required many internet minutes on the ship!
Pick Pockets

Pick Pockets Are Here To Stay
Pick pockets have been around for a long time and are here to stay. We encounter so many in Europe because it's easy to cross borders. Pick pockets are usually “gypsies” from another country.

Are Pick Pockets Dangerous?
Not normally. All they want is your money, preferably cash. In Venice, pick pockets keep the cash and drop your wallet in a mailbox so the police can try to return it.

Calculating Your Loss to Pick Pockets
One of the most costly items to lose is your US Passport. Been there; done that. My wife's purse was stolen with both passports the morning of our flight from Zurich to USA.

For planning purposes, I assume you need $2200 and four days to resume travel. If you lose your passport on a Friday, you'll have to travel to the US embassy at a different location in that country, go to the embassy on Monday AM, and you'll have your passports in 3-5 hours. Then you can book your plane back to USA for Tuesday. The high cost is booking 4 days hotel on an urgent basis, traveling to the US embassy in another part of the country, paying for meals, and cost to rebook flights to the USA.

Key Learnings
Don't carry passports in a purse unless you never set it down. Whenever possible, leave passports in the safe in your room. NEVER have the same credit card account as your spouse. ALWAYS have different credit card accounts so if your wife loses her card, yours still works. Buy a money belt and neck security pouch. Distribute valuables in more than one security pouch on your body.

Pick Pockets Are Ubiquitous
The risk is higher at major tourist sites, in crowds, big cities, port cities, train stations, and on public transportation. When you're at the Trevi Fountain or Spanish Steps in Rome, be assured there are pick pockets in the crowd. Don't be comforted that police are present. Police rarely have time to deter petty crime of pick pockets. And don't think you are safe in a house of God. I've seen pick pockets follow tourists into churches.

Be Wary of Aggressive Pick Pockets
For me, Barcelona is a troublesome city. Pick pockets impersonate policemen. They ask for your identification which is usually in your wallet. And they work in teams throwing white junk out of windows landing like bird shit on a traveler. The accomplice rushes to help the wary traveler and brushes him off while stealing everything in his pockets. I'm also troubled by aggressive pick pockets in Naples. But in most other cities in Italy, it's a simple matter of always wearing a money belt and a neck security pouch.

Check the web sites below for the latest pick pocket scams before you travel.

- Pickpocket Scams Reported in Rome Italy
- General Pickpocket Scams All Around Italy
- Pickpocket Scams in Florence Italy
- Pickpocket Scams in Milan Italy
- Pickpocket Scams Reported in Naples Italy
- Pickpocket Scams in Sicily Italy
- Pickpocket Scams in Venice Italy
- Child Pickpockets in Venice

The web site below has every conceivable safety device you may want to thwart pick pockets

http://www.corporatetravelsafety.com/
User Feedback Is Welcome

Goal
My guides are designed to help you plan a great cruise vacation by providing information such as where the ship docks, location of tourist sites, public transit, walking tour maps, things to see and do, travel issues unique to the port, etc. Knowledge of ports is important when planning shore excursions because you have to make many decisions and commitments long before your ship docks. I believe the information in this guide is accurate, however you are responsible to verify accuracy of the information that you use to plan your vacation.

Information on cruise ports frequently changes such as bus routes, admission fees to sites, rental car locations, etc. Cruise Critic is the best source for up-to-date, detailed information on travel details for shore excursions, reviews of cruise ships, etc. There are many knowledgeable people on Cruise Critic who are willing to share their expertise and travel experience. I highly recommend www.CruiseCritic.com; it's free to join.

Why feedback is important
User feedback helps me make corrections and improve the format and content in my quest to produce the “ultimate” port guides. I welcome offers to collaborate with me or provide materials for use in my guides.

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